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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : The Assistant Director, ORE
VIA: Chief, Administrative Staff
FROM : Chief, Presentation and Graphics Branch, ORE
SUBJECT: Situation Rooms for CIA

DATE: 16 January 1950

1. There has arisen, over the past few weeks, a situation involving the Presentation and Graphics Branch, its future, as well as general CIA economy and efficiency. It is felt that this situation should be brought to your attention as well as the Management Staff of CIA.

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2. It has come to the attention of this branch that General Division, ORE, and OPC are establishing their own situation rooms. Their calls upon this branch for advice in how to establish a room, what and how much is needed also indicate that these installations are to be set up by their own personnel, using the advice of a technically qualified person such as [REDACTED] of S/Pr, but without his knowledge of the use made of his advice. It is not known, at this time, whether other rooms such as these exist or are contemplated for other components of CIA, but it is known that many components of ORE operate their individual maps, using professional personnel for this purpose.

3. This situation was foreseen by this Branch as early as 1947 and now that it is rapidly materializing the time for some action is at hand. If individual rooms are to be sanctioned the question arises of the necessity for the room 117 Central Building. If the rooms are sanctioned the question of space and duplication must be considered. When space is at such a premium in CIA one wonders how any division or office can afford to release the required amount for an installation of this type. The duplication of maps, drawing materials, etc., is an item of considerable expense at a time when the CIA budget has been so rigidly set. Who will maintain these rooms? Will those who have the rooms use their present professional personnel to run such rooms? The answer to these questions, as well as the space and duplication factors, certainly brings to light a question of economy and efficiency.

4. On the other side of the ledger, the picture also presents problems. If Management Staff does not sanction the establishment of individual rooms and the CIA Situation Room in Central Building continues -- the old problem of geographic separation from the users is still a factor to overcome. Although we of the Presentation and Graphics Branch know we can give CIA a room to fit all needs of all

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The Assistant Director, ORE (cont.)

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offices, we are also cognizant of the location of other offices all over Washington. We can build "the better mousetrap," but whether CIA will beat a path to our door is still a moot question. We are certain of one thing. We do not feel that any other office should be permitted to increase their T/O to maintain a room if the CIA Situation Room is to continue to operate with its reduced T/O. There can be no doubt that the CIA Situation Room can present the best integrated picture of intelligence for all concerned.

5. After looking at both sides of the picture it appears:

a. That individual rooms to suit individual needs are arising due, mainly, to the distant location of the various offices of CIA in respect to the CIA Situation Room.

b. That space, materials, and personnel will have to be employed at the expense of economy and efficiency.

c. That a central CIA Situation Room, in its present location is open to question due to its distance from the CIA components.

d. That a central CIA Situation Room can provide the best integrated intelligence picture for all components of CIA.

6. Although the decisions regarding these developments are of a management nature, the following suggestions are submitted:

a. Close the present situation room, as such, using it only for presentations, films, etc.

b. Determine the necessity for the operational components of CIA to have situation rooms.

c. Establish a situation room in or adjacent to M and Q buildings. This room would service ORE, OSI, OO, and OCD in their immediate area. For those divisions or components who do not feel their material may be viewed by others, a "room within a room" would be established as has been done in other departments of the government.

d. The personnel now operating the CIA Situation Room be placed in charge of the situation room recommended and be charged with the responsibility of operating and maintaining any and all situation rooms subsequently established in CIA i.e. a room for the Director in Administration Building.


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e. If it is determined that a situation room is needed in L building, place the construction operation and maintenance under the control of the technically qualified personnel mentioned in paragraph 2.

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